

REMARKS

This paper is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated April 23, 2007, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on July 23, 2007.

Claims 2-3 and 7-20 are canceled without prejudice.

Claims 1, 4-6 and 21-24 are amended to correct matters of form and/or to correct grammatical/typographical errors.

Claims 25-33 are newly added to recite more clearly aspects of the subject matter.

Claim Objections

The Office Action objected to Claims 6-9 and 17-20 for lack of antecedent basis. Applicant has amended Claim 6 to obviate the objection. Applicant has canceled Claims 9 and 17-20 without prejudice, rendering the objection moot with respect to those claims. Applicant believes that no new matter has been added with these amendments. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – USC 102 and 103

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 10-13, 21 and 22 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by *Parker* US Patent Number 4,692,311.

The Office Action rejected Claims 7-9, 17-20, 23 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Parker*.

The Office Action rejected Claims 4, 14, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Parker* in view of *Fandel* US Patent Number 5,843,377.

The Office Action rejected Claim 6 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Parker* in view of *Niccum* US Patent Number 4,514,285.

Applicant has amended claims 1, 4-6, and 21-23, obviating the rejections. Applicant believes that no new matter has been added with these amendments. In particular, base claims 1, 21 and 23 have been amended to recite more clearly a vessel comprising a difference in cross-sectional areas and a plurality of apertures to provide passageways.

The references of record, alone or in any combination, do not teach, show or suggest a vessel comprising a difference in cross-sectional areas and a plurality of apertures to provide passageways as required in every claim as amended. *Parker*, considered by the Office Action as the closest prior art, discloses a constant diameter cyclonic particle stripping unit where the cross-sectional area of the cyclonic (upper) section is equal to the cross-sectional area of the stripping (lower) section. As such, *Parker* does not teach, show, or suggest a vessel having a difference in cross-sectional areas. *Parker* does not teach, show, or suggest a plurality of apertures to provide passageways. The other references neither add to, nor remedy, the deficiencies of *Parker*. As such, *Parker*, alone or in any combination with *Fandel* and *Niccum*, does not teach, show, or suggest the claimed invention. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, none of the cited references, alone or in combination, teach, show or suggest a vessel comprising an upper section with a first cross-sectional area, a lower section with a second cross-sectional area, and a lower section comprising a lower surface having a plurality of apertures formed therethrough, as required in new Claims 25-33. Applicant believes that no new matter has been added with these amendments.

For at least this reason, allowance of new Claims 25-33 is respectfully requested.

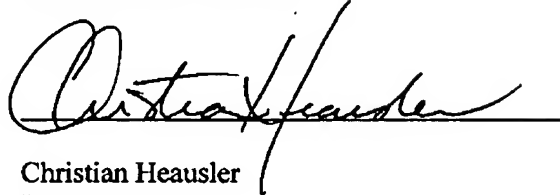
Applicant believes that all issues set out in the Office Action have been addressed; and, therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicant invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney if there are any issues outstanding which have not been addressed to the Examiner's satisfaction.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge counsel's Deposit Account No. 11-0400, for any fees, including extension of time fees and excess claim fees, required to make this response timely and acceptable to the Office.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his time on the matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 6/18/07



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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace drawing figures page 1/11 with the attached Replacement Sheet page 1/11. Figures 1 and 2 have been amended to identify the inner surface of the cyclone section 108 as described at least at paragraphs [0039] to [0041] of the specification. No new matter has been added.

Applicant believes that no new matter has been added with these amendments.